



City of Long Beach

GARY DeLONG
COUNCILMEMBER, THIRD DISTRICT

November 14, 2007

Colonel Thomas Magness
District Engineer
Los Angeles District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Re: Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Efforts in the City of Long Beach

Dear Colonel Magness:

The City of Long Beach is a partner in a comprehensive effort to restore the Los Cerritos Wetlands, a remnant of the estuary of the San Gabriel River and one of the largest remaining tidal wetlands in southern California. The once vast wetland areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties have been reduced by urbanization to approximately five percent of their pre-urban extent. At 453 acres, Los Cerritos is particularly valuable as a link between the tidal wetland areas of Bolsa Chica and Ballona Creek.

The City of Long Beach has for years placed a high priority on the restoration of Los Cerritos as a means of enhancing its natural resources and providing passive recreational and open space opportunities for its residents. Accordingly, the City is working with federal and state agencies, including the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority and the Trust for Public Land to acquire and restore those wetlands. Unfortunately, the high cost of a restoration has been a key factor limiting the City's ability to realize its dream. Major funding for the project could come from the Port of Long Beach, which has indicated its interest in this restoration effort.

While in Washington, D.C. two months ago, I met with Army Corps of Engineers staff regarding the project, and the next step appears to be to meet with you and appropriate staff in the Los Angeles District to discuss the role that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can play, specifically in facilitating the participation of the Port of Long Beach. Representatives from the Port will join us in this meeting.

The Port can participate in the restoration project if mitigation credits are available to offset impacts of future port development projects. The Port pays for restoration projects with Tidelands Trust funds, which is permissible when the generation of

mitigation credit is tied to the Trust purpose of maritime commerce. The Port Tidelands were granted to the City of Long Beach in trust for the people of the State of California. Further, the Tidelands Trust restricts the use of income and revenue generated from businesses and activities conducted on the tidelands. The revenues must be used for improving or maintaining harbor commerce and navigation, or for marine recreation or fisheries.

On the federal level, a restored Los Cerritos Wetlands would be a key component in a long-term plan to form a chain of wetlands along the coast of Southern California that would provide valuable winter habitat for migratory waterfowl, and would further the goal of increasing the amount of nursery habitat for key recreational and commercial fish species. In addition to the habitat value, there would be significant water quality benefits for coastal and freshwater areas from wetlands restoration. There are also benefits to the public's quality of life from a restoration project, and those benefits could translate into mitigation for unavoidable impacts.

To date, both the State and a local non-profit organization, Trust for Public Land, have invested approximately \$14 million to purchase approximately 66 acres of the former Bryant property within the Los Cerritos Wetlands project area. The Port, over the past 20 years, has a long history of participating in successful wetlands restoration projects, such as the Upper Newport Bay, Anaheim Bay, and the Bolsa Chica lowlands.

The City's Manager of Government Affairs Tom Modica will be in touch with your office to schedule this meeting. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,



Gary DeLong
3rd District Councilmember
Chair of the Federal Legislation Committee

CC: Bob Foster, Mayor of Long Beach
Patrick H. West, City Manager
Richard Steinke, Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach
Tom Modica, Manager of Government Affairs